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OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM SUPPORT AND SERVICES

96-03848

I. INTRODUCTION

1. By its decision 95/28, the Executive Board took note of the explanations given by the Administrator on the functions of the Office of United Nations System Support and Services (OUNS). The Board approved on a provisional basis the proposal relating to the Office of United Nations System Support and Services as contained in paragraphs 164-166 of document DP/1995/51. The Administrator was requested to inform the Board, through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, on the specific functions of the envisaged new posts in the Office of United Nations System Support and Services (1 D-2, 1 D-1, 1 P-5, 1 P-3) at its second regular session 1996.

2. Further, the Administrator was requested to report on the assistance rendered to the Secretary-General in ensuring policy coherence and enhancing coordination within the United Nations itself, in particular among headquarters departments, the regional commissions and the funds and programmes of the Organization, taking into account relevant discussions by Member States during the fiftieth General Assembly. This request is addressed in the paper entitled "The Administrator's support to the Secretary-General", originally circulated to the Second Committee (copies are being made available to the Executive Board).

II. MANDATE OF OUNS

3. The role of UNDP with regard to the resident coordinator was established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 32/197, 34/213, 47/199 and 48/162. This role stems from the multisectoral and integrative mandate of UNDP, its size and central funding capacity, its historical experience in providing the coordination function at the country level, and its role in financing the costs of the resident coordinator system.

4. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/50/202), "the role of the resident coordinator has grown over the last three years, not only in programme matters but also security, humanitarian, common administrative and protocol issues. Resident coordinators reported that they spent 39 per cent of their time on resident coordinator work and 41 per cent of their time on UNDP activities; the remaining 20 per cent is devoted to representing various funds and programmes of the United Nations, including the Department for Development Support and Management Sevices (DDSMS) of the Secretariat, the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Much of the growth of the role has been substantive. For example, the preparations for a country strategy note have been a pole around which substantive work has coalesced in some countries, in others, that pole has been the programme approach; in others, it has been the preparation of national contributions to global conferences".

5. In July 1994, the Secretary-General entrusted the Administrator with overall responsibility for improving the coordination of operational activities for development, including the strengthening of the resident coordinator system. Further, the Secretary-General requested the Administrator to assist him in ensuring policy coherence and enhancing coordination within the United Nations itself, in particular among headquarters departments, the regional economic commissions and the funds and programmes of the organization (SG/SM/5380).

6. The Administrator established the Office of United Nations System Support and Services to support him in fulfilling the mandate given by the General Assembly and the Secretary-General. The terms of reference of OUNS were communicated by circular UNDP/ADM/94/87 of 20 December 1994 (copies are being made available to the Executive Board).

7. The main functions of OUNS are to: (a) be the focal point for and provide support to the resident coordinators; (b) develop and support programmes and activities for preventive and curative development; (c) handle security-related matters of UNDP country offices; (d) support the Administrator in assisting the Secretary-General in ensuring policy coherence and enhancing coordination within the United Nations system.

III. OUNS STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

8. The OUNS structure is based on the experience obtained during its first year of operations. The Office has a directorate and two divisions: (a) the Division for Resident Coordinator System Support (DRCS) and (b) the Division for Policy Advisory Services (DPAS).

A. OUNS Directorate

9. OUNS is headed by a Director at the D-2 level (post provisionally approved in Executive Board decision 95/28). The Director assists the Administrator in his interaction with Under-Secretaries-General, Assistant-Secretaries-General, Executive Heads of Funds and Programmes and Directors-General of specialized agencies. The Director manages, on behalf of the Administrator, the agenda and calendar of United Nations Senior Officials meetings, United Nations Senior Officials Working Groups and interaction mechanisms among them, including an electronic messaging and discussion forum exclusively for Senior Officials.

10. The Director of OUNS continues to perform the duties of United Nations Deputy Security Coordinator; a Senior Liaison Security Officer (P-5), outposted in the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD), assists him on security-related matters.

B. Division for Resident Coordinator System Support

11. DRCS is responsible for the management of and support to resident coordinators. It is also responsible for providing substantive leadership for the UNDP contribution to the United Nations response to countries facing special development situations (previously provided by the former Humanitarian Programme).

12. The Division is headed by a Director at the D-2 level, assisted by a P-2 and has two sections: (a) the Resident Coordinator Support Section (1 P-5); and (b) the Emergency Response Division (ERD) (2 P-5).

13. The D-2 Director post and one of the P-5 posts in ERD were already part of the existing biennial budget (former Humanitarian Programme). The P-5 post for the Resident Coordinator Support Section was one of the new OUNS posts provisionally approved in decision 95/28. The third P-5 post is one of the five professional posts for which the Administrator requested, as part of the 1996-1997 budget proposals (DP/1995/51 dated 24 July 1995), that their final assignment be deferred. The Administrator will provide information to the Board at its current session on his decision concerning the final allocation of these staff resources. The P-2 post is a UNDP extrabudgetary post that was previously assigned to the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD).

14. The Resident Coordinator Support Section (RCS) is the focal point for receiving and processing requests and queries from resident coordinators. It provides advice or direct responses to problems encountered by resident coordinators and coordinates with and supports efforts of regional bureaux concerning briefings and consultations when in New York with authorities in the United Nations system. RCS prepares a resident coordinator management support plan. Its purpose is to serve as a dynamic management tool that outlines the strategic initiatives, focal points and resources for strengthening the resident coordinator system. Since 1994, the Section has managed the Special Programme Resources earmarked by the Administrator to support resident coordinators. Further, RCS has developed policy guidelines and defined overall criteria governing the use of the resources earmarked by the Executive Board for supporting resident coordinator functions in the 1997-1999 programming period (1.7 per cent of core UNDP resources). Within UNDP corporate strategy for information systems, RCS is the focal point for managing the development of information systems in support of the resident coordinator function. RCS is also involved in the design of training programmes for resident coordinators and participates as resource staff in workshops and seminars. RCS drafts reports for the Administrator on the resident coordinator system, such as the paper entitled "UNDP support for the resident coordinator system", originally circulated to the Second Committee (copies are being made available to the Executive Board).

15. Whereas the number of complex emergencies is increasing, the limited core staffing of the Emergency Response Division is insufficient to address adequately the needs of countries in special development situations. ERD is expected to provide substantive leadership and serve as a central resource to which regional bureaux and country offices can turn for knowledge and experience in crisis prevention, disaster preparedness and mitigation, rehabilitation and reconstruction, etc., and further develop and test new approaches such as the development of strategic development frameworks in countries confronting or emerging from crisis. Regional bureaux and country offices have full operational responsibility and accountability for implementation. In particular, in the context of the successor programming arrangements, ERD will establish overall criteria, a conceptual framework and, where possible, policy guidelines governing the use of the resources earmarked by the Executive Board for countries in special development situations (5 per cent of core UNDP resources). ERD will also be responsible for the overall coherence of UNDP responses in these countries and will provide substantive advice to the regional bureaux and country offices on operational aspects, as requested. Therefore, the Administrator will be strengthening the section with adequate capacity to provide substantive advice to countries in special development situations. As a first step, the Administrator has decided to assign to ERD a P-5 post out of the five Professional posts for which he requested that their final assignment be deferred until further options had been explored (see DP/1996/CRP.1).

C. Division for Policy Advisory Services

16. DPAS is responsible for supporting the Administrator in assisting the Secretary-General to ensure policy coherence and enhance coordination within the United Nations system.

17. The Division is headed by a Director (D-1), who is assisted by a Policy Affairs Analyst (P-3). These two posts are new and were provisionally approved in decision 95/28.

18. DPAS supports the Administrator in the following areas: (a) preparation of substantive documentation to facilitate exchanges among Senior Officials of United Nations programmes, funds, departments in the social and economic areas and regional commissions; (b) integrated follow-up to United Nations conferences; (c) interventions in the dialogue on the United Nations reform process; and (d) support for the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) special initiative for Africa, especially during the early formulative and operational period of this activity. The Division assists the OUNS Director in the preparation and servicing of all formal and informal meetings of the Senior Officials and in following their work in the context of task forces. On the follow-up to United Nations conferences, DPAS is responsible through the Administrator for supporting and assisting the three inter-agency task forces that have been established by the ACC. Work on the United Nations reform discussion is targeted at keeping

the Administrator and, through him in his special role, the Senior Officials, abreast of the discussions and proposals and for bringing together from these Officials their own observations for consideration by the Secretary-General.

IV. STAFFING TABLE

Level	OUNS			Total
	Directorate	DRCS	DPAS	
D-2	1	1	0	2
D-1	0	0	1	1
P-5	1	3	0	3
P-4	0	0	0	0
P-3	0	0	1	1
P-2	0	1	0	1
Professional Subtotal	2	5	2	**9**
General Service	2	4	2	**8**
Total	4	9	4	17

V. OUNS RESPONSIBILITIES VIS-À-VIS DEPARTMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

19. The responsibilities relating to the appointment process of resident coordinators were transferred from the Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD) to the Administrator, effective 17 October 1994.

20. OUNS became also the focal point for receiving and processing the annual report of the resident coordinator system in accordance with the joint proposal of 13 October 1994 of the Administrator and the Under-Secretary-General, DPCSD to the Secretary-General The Administrator will ensure that the reports are analysed with the participation of departments, offices and units concerned, and will respond with appropriate observations on behalf of the Secretary-General.

21. The Administrator will ensure that all authorities in the United Nations that should have contacts with the resident coordinators will be included in their briefing and consultation agendas. The process will ensure that resident coordinators are informed about relevant developments and policy issues that effect their work and responsibilities. The Administrator will communicate with resident coordinators in order to inform them of major developments arising from the work of the United Nations bodies, organizations and internal coordination mechanisms.

22. Further, in its resolution 50/120, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, after consultations with the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system to present to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1996 an appropriate management process containing clear guidelines, targets, benchmarks and time-frames for the full implementation of the resolution. The management plan will be developed by DPCSD. OUNS will continue to have managerial responsibility for providing operational support to the resident coordinator system.